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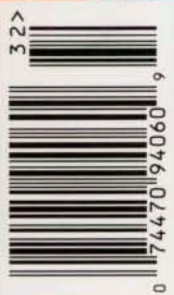
# Eating & Drinking

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO GOING OUT IN DALLAS



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# The Big



Concerned about where and how your food is grown? Join the club.

Story by Dawn McMullan  
Photography by Doug Davis



**O**NCE UPON A TIME, Whole Foods Market attracted a certain fringe crowd—people unlikely to shave their armpits who didn't wear bras and spent part of their day meditating.

Now Highland Park has a Whole Foods. So does Plano. And you can be sure those customers are wearing bras. Really supportive ones.

Sometime between the time Whole Foods came to the Dallas area in the late '80s and today,



**HEALTHY APPROACH:**  
Michael Tomas of Sunflower Shoppe is proud of the store's 100 percent organic produce department.



organic food has become almost mainstream. Even large grocery chains like Tom Thumb offer a handful of organic produce.

"Just 10 years ago, people weren't very educated on what organics are about and what they mean," says Scott Simons, **Whole Foods'** regional marketing manager. "Dallas has really come around."

So what does "organic" really mean? According to the USDA National Organic Program's web site, "organic food is produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations." In layman's terms, that means organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones, and organic food is grown without using most conventional pesticides or synthetic fertilizers. An organic farm must follow strict guidelines to earn USDA approval, so you can feel confident when you see that "certified organic" label on those tomatoes.

Whole Foods may have set organics afloat on the mainstream, but it wasn't the first to introduce us to the farming method. Ten years before the chain opened its first store in Austin in 1980, Lynn Remsing opened his organic **Gnismar Farms** in Dalworthington Gardens. That same year, the **Sunflower Shoppe** opened in Fort Worth. The family-run store filled the organic void before Whole Foods stepped in.

Interesting that Tarrant County caught on to the organic movement before Dallas County. Now Fort Worth has its own vegan, mostly organic restaurant. What has our local food scene come to?

Its senses, organic proponents say.

"People take for granted that when they go to the grocery store, the food supply is safe," Remsing says. "I'm a chemist by trade, which makes it very, very hard to look at the chemicals and say, 'Well, this is good to put on a crop.'"

Remsing's farm is known for its strawberries, cantaloupe, watermelon, and tomatoes. He says most of his customers are looking for flavor more than they're looking for organically grown food. They are also looking for a food source they can trust. »



## RESOURCE GUIDE

### » Where to go for organic foods.

**BreadHaus.** Mark and Petra Lively opened this German-influenced bakery in 1996, making breads and sweets with organic flour and grains. The eggs they use come from local, free-range chickens. 700 W. Dallas Rd., Grapevine. 817-488-5223. [www.breadhaus.com](http://www.breadhaus.com).

**Central Market.** This foodie heaven sells mostly organic produce, hormone-free meat, and

has its own line of organic products, which includes everything from mayo to milk. 5750 E. Lovers Ln. 214-234-7000. Multiple locations. [www.centralmarket.com](http://www.centralmarket.com).

**Crosby Cafe & Catering.** Owner and executive chef Jeanette Prasifka specializes in home-delivered vegetarian and vegan meals, but she'll accommodate an all-organic request. She also takes humanitarian pride in her organic, fair-trade, shade-grown coffee from

Bolivia and Mexico. The coffee is even certified bird-friendly by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, meaning habitats were not destroyed to raise these coffee beans. Prasifka plans to open a restaurant in the White Rock Lake area in the near future. 214-770-5573. [www.crosbycafe.com](http://www.crosbycafe.com).

**The Dream Cafe.** Here you'll always find a few organic items on its menu, from organic black beans to organic steel-cut oats. 2800 Routh St.,

The organic food industry is growing at a rate of 20 percent per year, according to the Organic Trade Association. Twenty-five percent of Americans eat organic food at least once a week, reports the Hartman Group. And 73 percent think it's important to know whether their food is grown locally or regionally, according to a national poll for the Organic Valley Family of Farms. "Organics is growing, but I think knowing your producer is growing faster," Remsing says.

Texas-based **Central Market** debuted an organic line, Central Market Organics, in January, which includes everything from mustard to milk. And all products are priced pretty competitively.

"We, along with a lot of people in the grocery business, see that consumers are more and more concerned about where their food comes from," says Mary Brown Malouf, Central Market's publications manager. "Traditionally, it's been Whole Foods' business to save the world. [Central Market] is just about turning people on to the joys of food. We, like so many high-end restaurants, choose organics because they are the best products available."

Organic food generally costs 25 to 40 percent more than non-organic, because it's simply more expensive to produce. Labor costs primarily drive up those prices. For example, on Remsing's farm, to treat the corn for corn earworms, workers individually put a drop of corn oil on top of

the silk. In the time that it takes Remsing's 10 men to treat 5 acres, a conventional farmer could have sprayed 500 acres with pesticide.

So why are people willing to pay the price? Several reasons, according to last year's Organic Foods Trend Tracker survey done by Whole Foods:

- » **58%** of organic eaters do so because it is better for the environment
- » **57%** to support small and local farmers
- » **54%** for health reasons
- » **42%** because they believe organic food is of better quality
- » **32%** because it tastes better

Amy McNutt, who grew up in South-lake, opened the **Spiral Diner** in Fort Worth

**HANDS ON:** Whole Foods carries a wide variety of organic fruit, including apples (below) and strawberries (left).



Ste. 170. 214-954-0486; Village on the Parkway, 5100 Belt Line Rd., Ste. 208, Addison. 972-503-7326. [www.thedreamcafe.com](http://www.thedreamcafe.com).

**Garden Cafe.** This pretty little restaurant in the Munger Place Historic District serves a handful of organics grown behind the restaurant, including okra, squash, onions, eggplant, and all its herbs. 5310 Junius St. 214-887-8330.

**George Restaurant and Catering.** George

and Katie Brown strive for about 25 to 50 percent organic in their restaurant. 7709 Inwood Rd. 214-366-9100. [www.georgerestaurant.com](http://www.georgerestaurant.com).

**Gnismar Farms.** Gnismar distributes produce to stores like Whole Foods and Central Market but also offers a fruit and vegetable stand and the pick-it-yourself option. Depending on the season, you'll find strawberries, tomatoes, peas, beans, and sweet corn.

Dalworthington Gardens, 3010 S. Bowen Rd. 817-469-8704. [www.gnismar.com](http://www.gnismar.com).

**Green Room.** When Chef Colleen O'Hare took over the kitchen in the spring, so did organic

**FROM GARDEN TO TABLE:** Garden Cafe in East Dallas is a popular spot for breakfast (below). Most of the herbs and vegetables are grown on-site (right).



for environmental reasons. "It would be ridiculous to open a vegan, organic restaurant in Cowtown and expect to make money," she jokes. "We keep prices really low, so we have to make up for it in volume." About 25 percent of McNutt's customers are vegan; another 25 percent are vegetarian. The others want to try something new and get educated along the way.

Many local restaurants are dabbling in organics. Some market it; some don't. They do it for the taste, the environment, the health benefits. And some just do it because they think it's the right thing to do.

"I think society has gotten so far away from the grass roots of food," says Colleen O'Hare, executive chef at the **Green Room**. "Everything is so processed now. We are trying to make a movement back to slow food, organic food, simple food, so people

realize what a carrot tastes like again."

Customers of restaurants featuring organic food often don't realize what they're eating is organic. But they do notice that what they're eating is more flavorful than your average chicken or tomato.

"I can tell the difference, especially with chicken," says George Brown, who opened **George Restaurant** one year ago. "If the animals we eat are being fed things that are strange, that affects your meat."

Taste and environment aside, price has to be a consideration. The flour Mark Lively buys for **BreadHaus**, his organic bakery in Grapevine, costs almost twice as much as conventional flour. With other ingredients, the cost spread can be even more. But Lively says his prices are comparable to conventional bakeries. "We just reduced our profits and we're okay with

## RESOURCE GUIDE (continued)

food. The restaurant is about half organic now, mostly produce. 2715 Elm St. 214-748-7666.

**Healthy Approach Market.** Owned by the son of the owners of the Sunflower Shoppe, this market carries many organic grocery selections. 5100 State Hwy. 121, Colleyville. 817-399-9100. [www.healthyapproachmarket.com](http://www.healthyapproachmarket.com).

**Local.** Much of Local's meat comes from Niman Ranch or Bell & Evans, which are free-range

and organic growers. Chef Tracy Miller also keeps a few organic cheeses on her menu, as well as organic produce when she can. 2936 Elm St. 214-752-7500.

**Loving Foods.** This co-op in Richardson offers hard-to-find raw cacao beans, super green powders, and organic produce. Call for location. 972-866-0012. [www.loving-foods.com](http://www.loving-foods.com).

**Nikolini Cafe.** This Greek restaurant is 96 to 97 percent organic, from its moussaka to its hummus. Nothing is cooked above 115 degrees to keep the nutrients "alive." 2714 McKinney Ave. 214-954-0303. [www.organicity.com](http://www.organicity.com).

**Pure Cafe.** This vegan, organic restaurant just opened in August and doesn't cook any of its food beyond 115 degrees to keep all the nutrients intact. 2720 Greenville Ave. 214-824-7776. [www.purerawcafe.com](http://www.purerawcafe.com).



the lifestyle we've chosen," he says.

Dale Wootton, an attorney who dabbles in food with his **Garden Cafe** in Munger Place, likens it to owning a condo in Colorado: "You don't ever want to calculate it."

The number of consumers willing to calculate it, though, is growing. And the number on display at the cash register can be painful. That's why people like Monica Brown are in business. She runs an organic co-op, **Your Health Source**, which delivers organic food twice a month to more than 500 families in around the Dallas-Fort Worth area. While it's not as convenient as going to the traditional supermarket, the prices can be as low as conventional prices—sometimes even less.

Brown agrees education is the key.

"Organics do cost more, but from the standpoint of the environment, it's our responsibility to take care of what we have," she says. "If I pay a little extra here, not only am I helping get the whole farming business turned around, but it's better for everybody. And you're saving your own health in the process."

Still, there are skeptics. As a Texan himself, Lively pokes a bit of fun at some of the customers who come through his bakery. "We do have a few true Texans who say they can get five loaves of bread for \$1 at Winn-Dixie. I give them a sample of our bread and tell them that if they can't taste the difference, I can see where it's of no value to them. And that's fine." **D**

**NO ANIMAL PLANET:**  
Amy McNutt, owner of the  
vegan restaurant Spiral  
Diner, took a big chance by  
opening in Cowtown.



**Roy's Nutrition Center.** This shop and health food cafe carries organic produce, bulk items, and vitamins. 130 Preston Royal Shopping Center. 214-987-0213.

**Spiral Diner.** The only vegan restaurant in Dallas-Fort Worth uses 60 to 70 percent organic ingredients. You must try all-you-can-eat pancakes (with organic vegan margarine and organic agave nectar) on Sundays. 1314 W. Magnolia Ave., Fort Worth. 817-332-8834. [www.spiraldiner.com](http://www.spiraldiner.com).

**Sunflower Shoppe.** Before Whole Foods changed the way many of us eat, there was the Sunflower Shoppe. Here you can get organic produce, juices, coffee, snacks, and more. 5817 Curzon at Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth. 817-738-9051. [www.sunflowershoppe.com](http://www.sunflowershoppe.com).

**Whole Foods Market.** This organic grocery store and more helped make buying organics part of the mainstream. Like Central Market, Whole Foods has its own competitively priced

line of products. 11661 Preston Rd. 214-361-8887. Multiple locations. [www.wholefoodsmarket.com](http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com).

**York Street.** Chef/owner Sharon Hage is a stickler for tasty, fresh, and locally grown. This often means organic. 6047 Lewis St. 214-826-0968.

**Your Health Source.** This organic co-op serves areas within two hours of downtown Fort Worth. 888-280-0494. [www.yourhealthsource.org](http://www.yourhealthsource.org).